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AUTHOR	Turner, Geraldine C.
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ABSTRACT

Three sections (two conventional and one experimental) of English 140 at St. Petersburg Junior College (Florida) were used to investigate whether or not the use of a writing laboratory would lead to writing improvement. The laboratory provided scheduled opportunities for writing revision and improvement through peer criticism and tape-recorder playback. For each of the two sessions, the three sections were taught by the same instructor. The course content remained the same for every section, except that, for the experimental sections, a lab period was substituted during one of the three weekly meetings. Students were grouped for comparison by use of their verbal School and College Ability Test (SCAT) score. Evaluation was based on students' final examination papers, which were examined and ranked by disinterested instructors. Results of the evaluation and comparison of the sections produced the following findings: (1) students in the experimental groups performed more consistently and slightly better; (2) since a positive or neutral attitude toward English influenced writing and course performance, the laboratory is considered more beneficial for those students who use it conscientiously; (3) there was some slight evidence that students in experimental sections completed the course with better final grades; and (4) results from both sessions were not significantly different. (JO)

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ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE

EXPERIMENT and RESEARCH

in the use

of

A WRITING LABORATORY

Geraldine C. Turner
St. Petersburg, Florida
June, 1970

JC 700 186

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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INFORMATION

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Geraldine C. Turner

FINAL REPORT

Title of Project:	Experiment and Research in the Use of a Writing Laboratory
Department:	Department of English (St. Petersburg)
Director:	Geraldine C. Turner
Duration of Project:	Session I, August 19, - December 20, 1968 Session II, January 6, - May 15, 1969
Reporting of Project:	Session III - Progress Report Submitted - May 29, 1969
	Session II, 1969-70 - Progress Report Made Orally to Dean Noel, January 15, 1970
	Session III, 1969-1970 - Final Report June 18, 1970

St. Petersburg Junior College

I. General Purpose

To conduct a laboratory in which several methods and techniques (peer criticism, revision of the student's own and others' writing, analysis of his own writing by tape recorder, and closer supervision of revising processes) could be used to develop in the student skills which would help him evaluate his writing in order to improve it.

II. Objectives of Experiment

A. General objective: To determine whether a student using the methods and techniques experienced and acquired in the writing laboratory improves his writing significantly more than students who do not use a writing laboratory.

B. Specific objectives in the use of the writing laboratory
   1. To give the student more supervision, guidance, and experience with methods only occasionally used (peer criticism) and with methods not previously used (revision of another's work and use of the tape recorder to revise one's own work.)

   2. To develop the critical judgment of the student in analyzing effective writing by providing more opportunities for the scrutiny of his own and other's writing.

   3. To get the student more consciously involved in writing and rewriting processes by guiding him in revising his own and others' writing.

   4. To place more responsibility on the student for his development of writing skills by introducing methods that require his performance.

C. Specific objectives in relation to the educational needs of the student
   1. Development of self-evaluation of his use of language was to be encouraged by these methods and techniques by which the student subjected his own and another's writing to closer and more objective scrutiny.

   2. Development of independence in the methods of evaluating his writing was to be fostered by these methods that the student employed without the intervention of the instructor.

   3. Development of self-reliance in improving his writing was necessitated when the student had to apply his insight for improvement with general suggestions from the instructor but without explicit directions.

D. Assumptions underlying laboratory experiment in a laboratory situation

1. That a student will have more supervision and practice with these methods and techniques for evaluating and revising writing than the conventional classroom allows.

2. That a student getting peer criticism and revising another's work can recognize and remedy his weaknesses more readily and improve his ability to communicate in writing more effectively in this interaction with other students than he can when working by himself.

3. That the student in using a tape recorder for revising his own composition can evaluate his language and writing more objectively and that his sense of hearing the language is at the same time more natural and more highly developed than his sense of observing the language.

III. Operation of Experiment

A. Organization

1. Two conventional, non-experimental sections of English 140 and one experimental section of English 140 were used.

2. The non-experimental sections had three class meetings per week for lecture, explanation, discussion, and occasional class writing (3) and evaluations of writing (3).

3. The experimental section had two class meetings per week for lecture, explanation, and discussion and one class meeting per week in the laboratory for writing and for the evaluating of writing.
This laboratory time was made possible by sacrificing student discussion occasionally in order to keep work loads and assignments equal between the non-experimental and the experimental sections.

4. The instructor (director) was given a class load reduction from four classes to three classes in order to carry out the experiment.
   a. To prepare and plan the experiment.
   b. To make laboratory arrangements. (This included personally arranging the laboratory facilities in six classrooms and in notifying the library of the laboratory needs and schedules.)
   c. To evaluate the results. Some evaluation of Session-I began in Session II, but most of the evaluation of the results of both sessions was begun at the end of Session II when both parts of the experiment were concluded. Some data could not be collected until the end of the year.
   This delay presented a problem to the director who was not scheduled to work on the project during the summer of 1969.

d. To report results. (Although it was originally supposed to benefit the instructor through the duration of the project, the class reduction was of no benefit in reporting results because Session I and Session II were concluded before all of the data could be collected. This was a serious flaw in the projected plans because the director was off duty during Session III (summer) and there was no other provision made for the director's time nor for compensation for the work done in evaluating the project.

B. Schedule for conducting laboratory

1. Duration through Session I and Session II, 1968-1969.

2. Number of laboratory meetings using designated methods and techniques:

First Session-total-14		Second Session-total-16	
Class writings	3	Class writings	3
Peer criticisms	2	Peer criticisms	3
Revision of another's work	2	Revision of another's work	2
Revision of own work	2	Revision of own work	2
Revision by tape recorder	5	Revision by tape recorder	6

3. Problems

Conducting the laboratory meetings was basically the same for both sessions except for slight changes and improvements suggested by both students and instructor. The main complaint was that the periods for revising by tape recorder were rushed. The student had no more than 20-25 minutes for going to another classroom or to the library, setting up his tape and materials, quickly recording and revising, and returning to the classroom. More laboratory facilities are needed if this method of revision is to have widespread, beneficial use.

C. Methods and techniques

1. Peer criticism -- At one class meeting papers were passed around the class for reading, commenting, and evaluating. (This was also done in the non-experimental sections.) At other class meetings peer criticism was given in small groups of four or five students.

2. Revision of another's work -- The use of this technique necessitated prearrangement by the instructor to see that each student had the paper of another student who did similar or weaker work than he. Therefore, this can be used only after the session is well underway.

3. Revision of own work by conventional methods -- This was done almost every time a paper was returned to a student, but in the laboratory meetings the student evaluated his own work with group guidance from the instructor. The progress class writing was returned to the students in all sections, experimental and non-experimental, without marks or comments from the instructor. Each student was to examine his paper for the weaknesses and strengths that were reflected by a given letter grade. Here the student was doing his own reappraisal of work written one week earlier. (These papers remained unmarked so that they could be read by independent judges. This plan for using the progress class writing as part of the evaluation was later abandoned.)

4. Revision of own work by using tape recorder -- The method had only about half of the laboratory time assigned to it because the first use was for demonstration, the second was for recording their first compositions, and the last was for listening to the original recording and evaluating one's own progress.

   Revision by tape recorder was accomplished in two ways: in one of six separate classrooms the student had from 15 to 20 minutes of private use of a tape recorder or in the audio-visual recording room in the library he had 10 or 15 minutes of semi-private use of a tape recorder.

5. Use of methods and techniques -- These were used interchangeably throughout the course, starting with the second week and continuing almost weekly until the next to the last week of the session.

   Three class meetings were used for class writings which coincided with class writings in the two non-experimental sections. The first of these was a diagnostic writing,the second was the progress grade writing, the third was scheduled about halfway between the progress writing and the final examination.

D. Content of course for laboratory experimentation
   1. Content of course for all sections, experimental and non-experimental, complied with the catalogue description. Time for classroom discussion seemed to suffer because of the time devoted to the laboratory session. Perhaps compensating for this, however, was the informal atmosphere of the laboratory sessions which allowed the students more time for an exchange of ideas on a one-to-one basis. Also, they had small group discussions on laboratory days when peer criticism was used.

2. The instruction, assignments, and subject matter covered either were equal or were as equitable as the instructor could make them. The experimental class was not given extra work, only extra opportunities to work on the papers.

3. With the exception of the laboratory sessions the experimental and non-experimental sections were conducted as similarly as possible.

4. The experimental section averaged almost one laboratory per week (16 in 17 weeks) in second session. This was better than the 14 laboratory meetings in the 17 weeks of the first session. The increase in the number of laboratory meetings in session two resulted from improved planning by the instructor after the experience in session one.

E. Facilities and their use
   1. Physical space
      a. One regularly assigned classroom
      b. Six classrooms used for peer criticism in groups and tape recording
      c. Library "Preview" room with six individual booths (facilities)

   2. Use of physical space
      a. The regular classroom was used as a writing laboratory for class writings, for revision of another's work, or revision of one's own work. This amounted to half the laboratory time during first session and a little less than half (7 times of 16) during the second session.
      b. On two or three occasions during first and second session respectively, vacant classrooms were used when the class was divided into small groups of three or four students. Each group was visited by the instructor during the forty-minute discussion period. The students usually felt that they needed more guidance from the instructor, and the instructor agreed. In the separate classrooms they were to have privacy. These discussions were not always as profitable as they might have been perhaps because there was no appointed leader.
      c. For the recording and revising by tape recorder these six classrooms and six recording places in the library were used. A tape recorder was set up in these classrooms by the instructor usually and supervised by the instructor, also and in the library by the audio-visual director and his assistant.

3. Disadvantages and Limitations
   a. In order for each student to use the tape recorder during a laboratory period the class was divided into two parts. Half the class used the tape recorder for 20-25 minutes of the class period; the other half used the remaining 20-25 minutes. The students in the half class present in the classroom were either preparing to revise by tape recorder or they were rewriting after having used it. The instructor was available for only limited help here and this was regrettable. Some of this half-class time was spent explaining the next assignment or evaluating the laboratory operation and effects. Also, on many occasions the instructor had to leave the classroom and help a student who was having mechanical difficulty with the tape recorder.
   b. The six recording locations in the library were not private for tape recording and revising as the locations in the separate classrooms were. Also the physical space for revising the paper cramped the student in his work. There were valuable minutes consumed by the students moving to and from the locations where the tape recorders were set up both in the library and in the classrooms. Although the library staff cooperated at all times and the instructor had the classrooms set up at all needed time, these laboratory facilities were make-shift and unsatisfactory.

F. Equipment and materials
   1. Twelve tape recorders (Wollensak and Concord) were supplied by the English Department and the Audio-Visual Departments of the Library.

   2. Four equipment trucks were used to transport and accompany four tape recorders.

   3. Thirty, five-inch, 600 ft. magnetic tapes (Scotch 201) were purchased and each student was supplied with and had exclusive use of one tape for the entire session. The first two recordings were preserved on side one of the tape for comparative use at the end of the session. The second side was used as the main experimental tool for revising the compositions throughout the session. These on side two could be erased and the tape reused indefinitely.

   4. Six empty five-inch reels were purchased to use as take-up reels on the six tape recorders belonging to the English Department.

5. Paper for reproducing diagrams and instructions for the students and for typing various reports was supplied by the English Department

6. Secretarial help for preparing materials and for typing reports was supplied by the English Department.

G. Expenses

1.	30 600 ft. magnetic tapes (Scotch 201) @ $1.50	--- $45.00
2.	6 empty, 5-inch reels @ $ .40	--- 2.40
3.	Instructor's 1/4 salary for reduced load	$2,890.00
4.	Instructors who compared student papers 30 hours at $10.00 per hour	300.00
5.	Compilation of data between May 17-May 30, 1969 - 27 hours at $10.00 per hour	270.00
6.	Secretarial help - not estimable	
7.	Paper used - not estimable	
	Total ---	$3,507.40

PART TWO: EVALUATION

I. Sources of Data for Evaluation

All data assembled could not be thoroughly evaluated, for it would be of doubtful value for this particular experiment for the director to spend time on all interesting facets that are usually present in a project of this type.

A. Test Scores

The verbal SCAT score was used to group students because it was the only language score consistently available.

The Senior Twelfth Grade Test, both total and English score, were given only a glance and were not considered extensively. Only about two-thirds of St. Petersburg Junior College students have attended Florida high schools; therefore the records cannot be complete. Although the two tests measure different elements, there is still a strong relationship because the tests are written and the student must read them in order to perform.

The Davis Reading test score was recorded but was not used in this project. But the relationship between the ability to read and the ability to write are certainly once again apparent. This relationship could be the focus of another special study.

B. Grades

A tabulation of progress, examination, and final grades was made in order to compare achievement of the experimental and non-experimental sections. In addition, the final grades were used in conjunction with attitude appraisal.

C. Attitudes

Attitudes toward English declared by the students themselves at the beginning of the course were examined in relationship to final grades.

D. Status

The status of students, repeating and non-repeating, has been considered in relation to attitudes and grades.

E. Compositions

Final examination papers of the experimental and non-experimental sections were compared by disinterested instructors. The original plan to compare "progress" papers at mid-term was abandoned primarily because the eight-weeks period hardly allowed time for a change in writing skills.

F. Subjective Evidence

The instructor appraised every available piece of evidence as named above and observed the students in the classroom, in the laboratory, and in conference.

G. Student Survey

A student survey was made at the end of each session. The results were tabulated and the items analyzed.

II. Evaluation of Achievement of Specific Objectives as Reflected in Student Survey

A. The student in each experimental section had supervision, guidance and experience with the several methods.

1. Session I: 45 class meetings of which 11 consisted of laboratory participation using the several methods.

2. Session II: 45 class meetings of which 13 were devoted to laboratories.

3. Approximately 24% and 29% of regular class meetings respectively were devoted to the use of laboratory methods.

4. Within these laboratory meetings, however, the instructor did not have as much time to spend with individual students as had been anticipated. The necessity to explain advance assignments used up some of this allotted time.

5. According to Question 3 of the student survey (Was the guidance given by the instructor in the laboratory sessions satisfactory?) the instructor's deficiencies were reflected in the answers from Session I when more than half of responding students complained that in the use of peer criticism and revision of another's work the guidance was not satisfactory. The instructor was able to remedy this in Session II and the improvement is reflected in the students' positive answers. However, the remedy was not so much in guiding them more but in explaining better why they had doubts in their ability to judge another's work.

B. The student was provided with more opportunities for developing critical judgment through the scrutiny of his own and other's writing.

1. From the students' own multiple answers to Question 4 on the student survey (Which of these methods helped you develop critical judgment of writing?) 14 indicated peer criticism, 18 replied revision of another's work, 16 voted for revision by tape recorder, 4 voted for revision by conventional methods, 1 said none was helpful.

2. Of the four methods, peer criticism was judged most helpful by 9, revision by tape recorder - 7, revision of another's work - 6, and 4 thought conventional methods were best.

3. To Question 10 on the student survey, (Did you feel that these methods helped you develop a closer scrutiny of your use of language?) 19 replied yes, 7 said no, 3 gave qualified answers.

   Seventeen students said one method was more helpful than the others and 11 of these named the tape recorder as most helpful; 4 named peer criticism; 2 said conventional methods were best.

4. To Question 9 (Did you feel that these methods developed in you a greater degree of objectivity towards your writing?) 22 students of the 29 responding said yes. When asked if one method was most helpful, 8 replied tape recorder, 4 said peer criticism, 2 said revision of another's work, 1 said conventional methods.

C. The student seemed to be more consciously involved in his writing and rewriting because of the guidance given him in revising in the laboratory meetings.

1. To Question 5 in the student survey (Did you feel more involved in writing and rewriting as a creative process by using these methods?) 21 of 29 responding answered yes.

   Of this 3/4 majority, ten said that the use of the tape recorder contributed most to this feeling, 7 said peer criticism contributed more. Only 1 upheld the conventional methods.

D. The student had more responsibility placed upon him for his development of writing skills because these several methods required his performance.

1. To Question 7 on the student survey (Did you feel more responsible for your writing improvement than you have previously felt in an English class?) 20 students said yes, 6 said no, and 3 had qualified answers. Usually this feeling was one of satisfaction, 16; 6 were dissatisfied, 5 felt neither.

2. To Question 8 (Did you feel more independent of the instructor than you have felt in other English classes?) 17 said yes; 10 said no; 2 gave qualified answers. Only 10 experienced this as a feeling of satisfaction; 7 felt dissatisfaction; 10 felt neither.

   In evaluating answers to Questions 7 and 8 the possible motives behind these feelings should be considered. Sometimes the dissatisfaction may be discomfort or insecurity produced by lack of opportunity for dependence on the instructor. I feel that some negative

answers are really confirmation of the success of the methods whether the student realizes it or not.

3. To Question 11 (Did you feel more self-reliant in improving your writing?) 19 students said they did feel more self-reliant, 6 did not, 4 had qualified answers. But no one method seemed to contribute to this feeling substantially more than any other one. (Tape recorder 5, peer criticism 3, conventional 2, revision of another's work 1; 9 left it blank.)

E. The student seemed to achieve much from the laboratory experience which would support the general purpose of helping him evaluate his writing in order to improve it.

1. To Question 12 of the student survey (Did you feel more confident about your writing in the future because of having used these methods?) 15 or over 50% responding said yes. An equal number of 5 for each felt that the use of peer criticism and the tape recorder contributed to this feeling of confidence. But 9 did not feel more confident.

2. In appraising the several methods used in the laboratory in multiple responses to Question 1 (Which of these methods used in the writing laboratory did you find helpful?) 22 votes went to the tape recorder, 20 to peer criticism, 11 to revision of another's work, and 7 to conventional methods.

   To Question 2 which pinpointed the most helpful method, 15 or more than 50% responding said the tape recorder was most helpful; 8 or 27.5% thought peer criticism most helpful; the other two methods got 3 votes each.

   To Question 6 (If you had had your choice, would you have used any method or methods more than any other?) 22 students said yes, and the high vote of ten went to peer criticism, followed by 9 for the tape recorder, 3 for revision of another's work, 1 for conventional methods. I interpret this vote for peer criticism as meaning that some were disappointed that we didn't make more use of this method, even though it was not voted the most helpful.

3. In appraising the experimental class as a whole in answer to Question 13 (Would you have chosen this experimental class if you had known of it in advance?) 16 students answered yes, 7 said no, 3 had qualified answers, 3 did not answer. (Their reasons are various and are considered later in this report.)

   Most important perhaps in measuring the success of the laboratory was Question 14 (Would you recommend such an experimental class to your friends?) to which 20 answered yes, 4 said no, 2 gave qualified answers, 3 did not answer.

Question 15 (Were there times during the session when you wished you were in a non-experimental, more conventional class?) revealed that even under inconvenient, make-shift laboratory conditions 15, more than 50% of those responding, said no. The 12 who had wished they were offered valid and varied reasons, some blaming the laboratory conditions and others regretting that they didn't get any more out of it than they did.

4. The use of the tape recorder was appraised also with Question 16 on the student survey (If the experiment had permitted it, would you have used the tape recorder for revision outside of class?) when of the 29 responding 18 said yes, 8 said no. But on further questioning 16 said they would have done so voluntarily and 9 said they would on request or assignment.

5. The experiment had mixed influences on the students' attitudes toward writing and the study of English.

   In Question 17 (Did using these methods to try to improve your writing change your attitude towards writing in any way?) 16 said yes and 12 said no. When asked how, some specified that they were more critical, more objective, more organized, more careful, and that they had put forth more effort and received more enjoyment.

   To Question 18 (Did using these methods to try to improve your writing change your attitude towards the study of English in any way?) only 11 said yes, and 15 said no. But those who specified how it had changed their attitudes said the study of English was made more interesting, challenging, rewarding. Besides mentioning the organizing, planning, and "do's and don'ts" of writing, several referred to "understanding its beauty," "opening a new field," learning "more in this semester than all four years of high school," and one said, "It made the subject one of helping rather than despair."

6. To the students the success of this experiment with a writing laboratory was best indicated by their suggestions for improvement of the usage in the future. Some benefiting from peer criticism wanted more of it, more often, and more intensive criticism. Some benefiting from the use of the tape recorder wanted more tape recording sessions, usage with every paper, more time for each session, usage outside of class, and perhaps group work with the recorder. Some were not very happy with the laboratory, of course. One felt that he did not get enough concrete suggestions for improving writing and another said he did not get enough of the instructor's time.

III. Evaluation of Achievement of General Objective

A. Comparison of Student Papers by Disinterested Judges

1. Methods and Procedures

The final examinations of the experimental sections were compared with the final examinations of the non-experimental sections. These comparisons were made for both sessions.

The papers were grouped according to similar and sometimes identical verbal SCAT scores of the students with only occasional variation. Usually there was one paper from each section, making three in all. But for the first session, in a total of twelve groups, three groups had four papers each; one had six. This arrangement sometimes made judging difficult. For second session, all seventeen groups except two were limited to three papers, one experimental and two non-experimental.

The papers were read and rated, first for best, second for next best, third and so forth. The papers were judged for (1) a clear statement of a main idea or thesis, (2) development of this thesis (explanation by supporting points supported by details, examples, illustrations), (3) a concluding statement similar in meaning and pointing back to the thesis, and (4) correctness in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammatical forms.

The panel of judges working independently and unknown to each other consisted of one faculty member from the St. Petersburg Campus, Department of English, one faculty member from the Clearwater Campus, Department of English, and one faculty member from St. Petersburg High School, Department of English.

2. Evaluation

In the resulting evaluations of the forty-two papers of Session I the judges were in unanimous agreement in the ranking of the experimental papers within their respective groups in six out of twelve groups. They were within one place variation (such as one first place, two second place) in eight instances within the twelve groups. In one large group of six papers the variation was widespread and erratic. It was this kind of difficulty and inconsistency that disclosed the weakness of having more than four papers in a group and pointed to the wisdom of having only three papers in a group whenever possible.

In Session II of fifty-three papers divided into seventeen groups the judges were unanimous in the ranking of experimental papers in ten groups. They were within one place variation in four instances. In two groups of four papers each the variation was greater. In one

group of three papers the variation was extreme and in another some data had to be discarded.

3. Tabulation

Because of the closeness of the judges' estimates, the results and findings can be considered trustworthy even if not spectacular. The results of the judging are as follows:

In Session I

First place ranking	
Experimental	38.9
Non-experimental	61.1
Second place ranking	
Experimental	45.7
Non-experimental	54.3
Third place ranking	
Experimental	33.3
Non-experimental	66.7
Fourth place ranking	
Experimental	36.3
Non-experimental	63.7

In Session II

First place ranking	
Experimental	29.7
Non-experimental	70.3
Second place ranking	
Experimental	40.5
Non-experimental	59.5
Third place ranking	
Experimental	29.7
Non-experimental	70.3

4. Observations and Conclusions

a. Using hypothetical averages, one might expect that with three classes there could be an approximate three-way split of first, second and third places. In Session I this is true only of third place. In the other instances the experimental class has a higher percentage. In first and second places this seems to indicate that the students in the experimental section with similar SCAT scores were writing slightly better than the students with comparable scores in the non-experimental sections. However, the experimental section had the largest percentage of fourth places, too. With so few papers in this four-paper grouping, one very bad and incomplete paper from the experimental section can account for

this fourth place ranking being slightly higher than its expected one third percentage.

b. Also in Session I in two special groups two students from the experimental section were compared with two students from the non-experimental sections who had scores several points lower, such as 89-88 to 86-80 and 80-80 to 74-71. In the first group the experimental papers were ranked second and fourth, in the second group they were ranked second and third. Seven of these eight students liked English. Three of the four experimental students were conscientious in the use of the laboratory methods. The paper of this one student (a declared English major) who did not make conscientious use of the laboratory received a fourth place ranking from all three judges. In the second group the judges gave two fourth places and a third place to a paper of the non-experimental student who "disliked" English.

c. There was always the question throughout the two sessions about what some of the students in the non-experimental sections might do if they had had the added opportunities and responsibilities to work more with peer criticism and with the tape recorder. With these acceptable verbal SCAT scores shown here it might seem that those without the laboratory had the advantage over those with higher scores and the use of the laboratory. However, not one of the four non-experimental students seemed to be working to capacity and only one experimental student seemed to be achieving to capacity, and that one was the only final grade of B along with seven C's.

d. In Session II the experimental section had fewer first and third places than might be expected but it had a higher percentage of second places. However, the second place percentage (40.5) is considerably lower than the second place percentage for Session I, (45.7). A closer study of the individual student's record and performance does not reveal any valid reason for this. It may be that the higher percentages are purely arithmetical phenomena brought about by a variation of judges' decisions based largely on groups of three. For example, an experimental paper in one group might be given two first places and one second place; in another group another experimental paper might get two third places and one second place: Only in three groups in a total of 29 did an experimental paper receive a unanimous decision for second place.

e. In Session II there were three special groups in which a paper of a student in the experimental section was compared with papers of two students from non-experimental sections. One student had a higher verbal SCAT score and the other a lower SCAT score than the student in the experimental class. In

these groups only one experimental paper received a unanimous first place from the judges; the other two received unanimous third places. If a verbal SCAT score were the basic, determining factor then all three of the experimental papers should have received second places. In these particular cases the first-place student and one third-place student were taking the course for the first time. The other third-place student was repeating. A closer look at all available factors shows that this repeating student was the most conscientious of the three and used the laboratory to advantage. Also he "liked" English. His two counterparts in the non-experimental sections did not "like" English. The only safe conclusion to be drawn here is that a well-written paper requires more than a positive attitude, conscientious performance, and an acceptable verbal SCAT score (72). The writing laboratory did not help this particular student write a better paper than the other two students who did not have use of the writing laboratory. But perhaps it helped him write a better paper than he could have without it. He himself thought this was the case.

f. One general reservation about the experimental papers for Session II is that the examination came late in the week; it was the last examination for many. As many rushed through it and left early, the instructor felt that the results of this study might be affected.

g. As pointed out earlier there were more repeaters in Session II classes than in Session I classes. In Session I, of the students whose papers were compared 7 of 42 (or 16.6%) were repeating the course. In Session II, 26 of the 53 students (or 49%) were repeating the course. Observations of the students' test scores, grades, attitudes, performance, habits are fraught with so many variables that any generalizations would have little validity. Observations of repeaters' performances failed to reveal any discernible pattern.

B. Instructor's Judgment of Comparison of Student Papers

Another way of trying to compare performances of the students in the experimental sections and non-experimental sections was to observe the ranking of the individual experimental paper in relation to the specific SCAT score of the student and then to judge whether the experimental student seemed to be performing better or worse than the non-experimental student having similar or identical scores. The observations were:

(See on page 17)

B. (continued)

	Session I	Session II	Special Groups
1. Performing better than a higher score	4	3	3
2. Performing better than same score	3	4	NA
3. Performing better than lower score	1	3	1
4. Performing worse than higher score	1	4	2
5. Performing worse than same score	3	9	NA
6. Performing worse than lower score	4	4	4

In the three categories of "performing better," 1 and 2 with seven each seem to be credits. Categories 3 and 4 are perhaps to be expected. Categories 5 and 6 with 7 and 13 "performing worse" than the same or lower level is not encouraging. Again Session I with few repeaters and therefore more representative classes presents a "Bell Curve" in performance. In Session II even the larger number of repeaters certainly cannot explain why there should be a larger number of students in the experimental section performing worse than those in the non-experimental sections. However, it should be pointed out that the laboratory makes extra demands upon these repeating students which they cannot fulfill. If the repeaters could not meet the responsibilities, requirements, disciplines in a conventional English 140 class the first time, or even the second, the use of a writing laboratory is certainly no assurance that they will muster these qualities when repeating the course. In fact, the laboratory may even be a detriment to a student who does not change his habits, attitudes and motives when repeating the course.

From their own admission some students, both those taking the course the first time and those repeating it, have felt a change of attitude and better performance simply because of a new approach or method. This new approach inspires some into better performance when they work harder. But it may also inspire others whose inspirations fade away without self-discipline and perseverance to carry through the assignments conscientiously.

C. Comparison of Grades

A numerical comparison of progress, examination, and final grades was made and tabulated as follows:

	Session I						Session II					
	Progress		Exam		Final		Progress		Exam		Final	
Grades	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
B	0	0	6	8	3	5	0	2	2	5	2	4
C	11	28	8	24	11	24	15	27	14	25	14	24
D	8	12	3	6	3	10	4	9	4	8	4	11
F	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0

(See total next page)

C. (continued)

TOTAL

Grades	Progress Ex	Progress N-Ex	Exam Ex	Exam N-Ex	Final Ex	Final N-Ex
A	0	0	0	2	0	1
B	0	2	8	13	5	9
C	26	55	22	49	25	48
D	12	21	7	14	7	21
F	1	2	1	2	1	1

On the basis of surface observations of these grades it appears that the use of the writing laboratory is of the most benefit in getting the students' work from the barely acceptable to acceptable standards. From the above figures there is an indication that fewer students in the experimental sections with D's for the progress grades went on to make D's for final grades. In the non-experimental sections just as many students made D's for both progress and final grades.

The more capable student may not be helped as much by a writing laboratory because peer criticism may not be valuable in analyzing his more sophisticated problems. Also, because he may already observe his language usage better than many, the device of the tape recorder may not be helpful. If these methods do not seem beneficial to him, he sometimes has little incentive and may not be conscientious about using the methods available. The instructor observed this on several occasions with students who showed superior language skills. Nevertheless, the experimental sections had a disproportionate number of B's on the final examination and more than the mythical third (35%) of the B's on final grades.

D. Comparison of Student Attitudes and Final Grades

A comparison of student attitudes and final grades was made to try to determine if the use of the writing laboratory was influenced by attitude and in turn if a better attitude produced performance that was reflected in better grades.

1. Procedures

At the beginning of each session students in all sections were asked, "How do you feel about the study of English?" (The phrase "study of English" was not defined or interpreted for them.) They had five choices for an answer:

a. I like it very much.
b. I like it.
c. I am neutral.
d. I dislike it.
e. I dislike it very much.

2. Tabulation of attitudes and final grades

SESSION I

	A		B		C		D		F		Total		W	
	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-EX	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex
LVM			1		1	1	1				3	1		
L			1	3	5	13	2	2			8	18	2	3
N			1	2	4	2		3			5	7	4	7
D					1	3	1	4	1	1	3	8	1	1
DVM								1				1		
Total			3	5	11	19	4	10	1	1			7	11

SESSION II

	A		B		C		D		F		Total		W	
	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex	Ex	N-Ex
LVM			1		1	3					2	3	2	
L	1			1	7	9		1			7	12	2	5
N				2	3	7	3	6			6	15	1	8
D			1	1	3	6	1				5	7		
DVM								2				2		
Total	1		2	4	14	25	4	9					5	13

The individual declarations of attitude were used to correlate attitudes with final grades. Where possible each student in an experimental section was compared with one or two students in a non-experimental section who had a similar verbal SCAT score. Their stated attitudes and final grades were observed. The tabulation of these comparisons were divided into three major categories with three subdivisions each:

Category I	Session I	Session II	Total
Better attitude-better grade	10	4	14
Better attitude-same grade	9	6	15
Better attitude-lower grade	3	1	4
Category II			
Same attitude-better grade	3	2	5
Same attitude-same grade	5	2	7
Same attitude-lower grade	7	5	12
Category III			
Lower attitude-better grade	3	1	4
Lower attitude-same grade	3	8	11
Lower attitude-lower grade	8	1	9

3. Evaluation

a. In both experimental sections in both sessions there were students with better attitudes receiving better grades or the same grades as their counterparts in non-experimental sections who had similar verbal SCAT scores. Perhaps this is to be expected. This relationship between better-attitude-better grade was more pronounced in Session I where there were only two repeating the course out of a total of nineteen. The number of cases is much smaller in Session II in the experimental section which had twelve of twenty students repeating the course.

b. In Session I there was a high correlation between lower-attitude-lower grade and in same attitude-lower grade. This indicates that the laboratory made little difference in the performance of the students whose attitudes were neutral or negative. There seems to be a wide range in test scores (91-10) of students having same-attitude-same grade and same attitude-lower grade. In the better attitude-better grade group the test score range is 97-74; in better attitude-same grade the range is 89-10. Those with lower attitude-lower grade again showed a range mainly from 91-43. Three comparisons showed a better attitude-lower grade, a lower attitude-better grade, a lower attitude-same grade, a same attitude-better grade.

c. In Session II comparisons of better attitude-better grade and better attitude-same grade were fewer than in Session I. The better attitude-better grade comparisons appeared mainly in the same score range (82-80); but the better attitude-same grade were in the lower SCAT score range (66-01). In this session there was a small block of student comparisons (8) which showed lower attitudes with same grades and there were five comparisons which showed the same attitude with lower grades. This may reaffirm that motivations other than a positive attitude are needed for achieving success.

d. From this brief and limited look at the possibility of students' attitudes reflecting grades, it does not seem that student attitude has significant bearing on conscientious performance in the laboratory for students who have high test scores. In the range from 72 down to 01 attitude may help the student who uses the laboratory to get enough extra help to hold his own. The repeating student may also benefit from the laboratory. All fourteen repeating students passed the course. But since this was at least a second attempt with past experiences to help him, the success of the repeater cannot be attributed to the use of the writing laboratory.

e. Certainly the students with positive and neutral attitudes seemed to fare better, as would be true in any class. And as indicated by the verbal SCAT score, those that disliked the subject did not usually perform as well as might be expected. However, there were those who liked the subject and who were not repeaters who seemed to receive no motivation from the laboratory experience to perform to capacity.

f. These observations on individual attitude and performance are borne out in the table displayed earlier which showed numbers by attitudes compared with numbers by grades. The number of students with a declared attitude and a particular grade in the experimental sections matched very closely the number of students in non-experimental sections who had similar attitudes and grades. There were only two exceptions. In Session I a large percentage of students in the experimental section who were neutral had better grades than those who were neutral in the non-experimental sections. In Session II a larger percentage of students in the experimental section who "liked" English got "C's."

g. There are too many variables that cannot be shown nor traced in a survey as limited as that above. Although these meager findings confirm what is common knowledge, that attitude can help to motivate a student to perform, there is little proof here that the students' positive or neutral attitudes at the beginning of the course and the experiences of the laboratory together produce a better grade.

h. But an interesting sidelight was thrown on the question of why students drop English. It does not seem to be because they "dislike" it. Of those withdrawing from the course in two sessions only two said they "disliked" English; two others said they "like it very much;" twelve said they "liked" it; and twenty said they were "neutral." These declarations were made at the beginning of the course yet 24% of those beginning the course did not complete it at that time.

E. Instructor's Subjective Appraisal of Student Individual Performance

These observations are based on the instructor's appraisal of the individual performance of each student in the experimental sections in order to determine, in view of all factors studied, if the student personally benefited from the use of the writing laboratory.

1. Criteria used in the appraisal:

a. The students' test scores
b. The students' displayed abilities
c. The execution of laboratory tasks
d. The professed attitude toward English
e. The degree of motivation in the performance of writing tasks
f. The status of the student, repeater or non-repeater

2. Results:

a. Students benefiting		Students not benefiting
Session I 9 (2 repeaters)		8
Session II 9 (5 repeaters)		11 (5 repeaters)

b. Students conscientiously applying self	Students not applying self
Session I 10 (2 repeaters)	7
Session II 9 (5 repeaters)	11 (5 repeaters)

c. Performance seemingly reflecting attitude	Undetermined	Performance contradicting attitude
Session I 12 (2 repeaters)	1	4
Session II 13(8 repeaters)	3(1repeater)	4 (1 repeater)

3. Conclusions

a. About half the students benefit from the writing laboratory.

b. The half that benefits correlates closely with the half that applies itself to the tasks.

c. The performance of 67.5% of the students appraised seemed to reflect their attitudes toward English. They seemed to perform well and benefit if they liked English or were neutral toward it; they did not perform well and did not benefit if they disliked English.

d. Also, 21.6% of the appraised students seemingly performed in contradiction to their attitudes. But more like it and perform badly than dislike it and perform well. Not one student in the experimental sections who said he disliked English fully benefited, and only one disliking English applied himself diligently. Eight students who said they liked English still did not fully apply themselves and benefit. Eight neutral students benefited; only two neutral students did not benefit.

e. Of the twelve students repeating English, three of four who liked it benefited. But the four who said they disliked English, did not fully benefit. Since these four have verbal SCAT scores of 71, 80, 86, 91, it would seem highly probable that attitude is a chief reason for their repeating the course.

F. Student Comments from Survey

1. On Particular Methods

a. Peer Criticism

"Helped me see my own errors better"
"Easier for others to see your mistakes"
"It gave me added perspective and insight."
"Most clear, concise way of seeing how to improve my paper"
"Brought out ideas quickly"
"Enjoyed discussing my writing with others"
"It was helpful."
"To improve one's writing constructively"
"I was more careful with what I said because I wanted as little criticism as possible."
"When others criticize you, you know how you stack up."
"You get more ideas and judgments."
"I see my mistakes clearly."

b. Tape Recorder

"You capture an idea at the time it occurs."
"Easier to see mistakes if you hear them"
"Self-criticism easier by tape recorder"
"Conventional method gave the grammatical errors while listening gave the unity and disorganization of the paper."
"In listening to yourself weak points are brought out more readily."
"Showed weakness far better than any previous method"
"Problem areas are quickly revealed."
"Being able to tape and rehear what was written helps you do the work on your own, find your mistakes and also gives new ideas as to what could be said. Using your own mind is great."
"Helped me find my own mistakes"
"Can hear mistakes"
"Find your own weak point"
"This method of tremendous benefit"
"Enjoyed hearing my own writings and discussing them with others"
"More effective to hear it back than just rereading it"
"Instruction"
"Independence"

c. Revision of Another's Work

"Student not qualified to revise another's work"
"A paper may not make sense."
"It's difficult to revise a person's work without revising his style."
"Can be more critical"

d. Revision of Own Work by Conventional Methods

"We generally did it ourselves."
"It was helpful on punctuation but not with ideas' presentation."
"Used along with tape recorder"
"In the little time allocated to EH 140 the conventional method seemed most effective, unable to properly develop other methods"

2. On Operation of Laboratory

a. First Session

"Students didn't know what to do."
"Students didn't know how to criticize."
"Didn't know where to begin"
"It took a long time to get going."
"No personal guidance"
"Students not completely frank"
"Lack of communication resulted in poor discussion."
"No guidance"
"Too much material in one class"
"More learned in groups of two"

b. Second Session

"Need more time"
"Not enough time"
"I would put more emphasis on writing a good paper in the first place and less on manipulating it after it was written."

3. On Results of Laboratory Methods

a. Affirmative

1) Session I

"It didn't seem to be work anymore."
"It showed how much there is to writing a good paper."
"Made me more critical of my writing and of other author's writing"
"Helped me be more critical and objective"
"Made me aware that other's will be reading my writing and need to understand it"
"Before ideas haphazardly arranged and written so"
"It made me write more."
"English more interesting when it becomes more of challenge"
"It made it more interesting and challenging."
"It makes me study longer and put more interest into it."

2) Session II

"They all helped."
"More prepared to revise my own work now"
"These sessions made me think and write with more care and less haste. Also, I have an idea what to watch out for."
"To put more in a composition"
"I know and understand a few good concepts of good writing."
"I enjoyed writing more because I know more of what I am doing and exactly what it is I am aiming for."
"You can't always take short cuts in writing a good paper; you get what you put in."
"I have a better idea of what to look for -- mistakes, good points, do's and don'ts."
"It opened a new field to me."
"I learned more in this semester than all four years of high school."
"It made the subject one of helping rather than despair."
"Much more organized; class runs smoother"
"I can objectively study a subject and mentally formulate a plan of work.""

b. Negative

1) Session I

"Never looked forward to an English class and still don't"
Session II
2) "Grades didn't improve from high school; if anything, they decreased."
"Just another lecture

4. <u>On Experiment as a Whole</u>

a. Affirmative

1) Session I

"Exciting to be in experiment, contributing something, more interesting"
"Good to try new ways"
"Something new, different, challenging"
"Different approach to learning to write"
"Perhaps these methods will be used someday in all classes."
"Experience"
"You get something worthwhile out of it."
"It helped me."
"Interesting and beneficial"
"Methods very helpful"

"Weaknesses can be recognized and worked on"
/I would recommend class/
"So they may receive the same help I received"
"Something new, different, and challenging"
"I was satisfied."
"I liked it."
"Helped me find my weaknesses"
"Thought /these were/ better ways and methods"

2) Session II

"Because of the challenge it set up"
"To get variety in what can be a dull class"
"Interesting and different"
"I like new innovations in class procedure."
"It's more interesting than just lecture."
"To guide me in writing a better paper"
"I needed help in my writing that a standard class could not have helped."
"It would be a new and different experience and all must participate all the time not just sometime."
"This type of class learning is of much greater value to the students. He takes an interest."
"Gives you experience of talking on tape recorder."
"It helps more than regular class"
"Gives person better insight in his writing techniques"
"Feel writing should be good and this class helps young people write better"
"It helps the organization of a whole idea (or paper) instead of partial concepts."
"Change for improvement"
"I feel it helps a person to really learn English usage."
"It's interesting."
"To aid students in writing better papers."
"This course was complete."
"I felt it was a great class."
"I was always content being in this type class."
"It was interesting and had much to offer."
"The class was a great experience."
"At the beginning /I wished I weren't in this class/ but after that I loved it."

b. Negative

1) Session I

"Experiments usually mean work."
"Used to conventional ways"
"Because of the grading"
/I might recommend class if/ "They were doing poorly in composition because they were bored with subject"
"In beginning I could see little improvement"
"Couldn't get used to tape recorder."
"Grades"

2) Session II

"When experimenting there's a chance of failure; another chance I don't need."
"Uncertainty about being able to manage it"
"Apprehension about new and different ideas"
"I would have preferred a straight class."
"Chance of failure"
"May help, may not"
"Class did not have adverse or converse effects."
"Sometimes I got fed up with it all."
"I don't feel like I learned anything; perhaps another approach would have helped."
"Too much 'hussel' and pressure on student and teacher"
"Need more critical analysis of my work."
"Taped sessions were extremely rushed"
"I don't think most aspects of this class helped me objectively."

PART THREE: SUMMARY

I. Observations

A. Although the two experimental sections were small, the total number students for two sessions was 41. In Session I the classes, both experimental and non-experimental were representative; but in Session II the number of repeaters was much larger. This confuses the analysis because results of both sessions were not significantly different. But it confirms the need for an experiment to be run more than once.

B. The running of the experiment for two sessions is important because one term or session does not allow time for the instructor to execute, to revise, or to observe and evaluate the process in operation. An experiment as an isolated, one-session project, may be a freak and as such be of little value. A second running may increase validity of the findings.

C. The difficulty of obtaining statistical proof is always a problem in the evaluation of subjective material such as written composition. The three neutral judges tried to apply the same criteria; but even though they are experienced teachers, they are still three individuals reacting to the written expression of other individuals.

D. The instructor in making assessments of student performance and achievement tried to consider numerous factors for a final judgment as to whether students' work habits and achievements correlated with their attitudes and displayed abilities in order to judge the benefit of the laboratory to each student.

E. The students themselves gave their testimony in the survey and in their comments. Certainly the majority were enthusiastic but enthusiasm alone doesn't produce improvement in writing. Some of their positive attitudes, their feelings of success, and the reflections of these in their comments favorable to the methods and the laboratory may be evidence of the "Hawthorne effect," which can in turn contribute to the success of the experiment.

F. The instructor may also be influenced by the enthusiasm for innovation. Because of this, the total project was evaluated in retrospect to gain objectivity and to approach evaluation from as many angles as feasible.

G. Balancing both of these attitudes of some students and the teacher caught up in the excitement of the new method was some resentment of those who resist change, some hostility of those who suspect the new and untried, some resistance of those who resent work. Some students associate all action with extra work and resent action and/or work even when it is beneficial and helpful.

H. Although there seems to be little bold and positive proof showing that the students using the methods and techniques in the writing laboratory improved their writing significantly more than the students not using the laboratory, it would be erroneous to ignore or minimize what proof there is. One cannot say that failure to prove tangible results to be found in such subjective material and influenced by so many variables means that there are no benefits derived. Indeed the feelings of students -- whether they be called confidence, satisfaction, or hope -- was registered too often to be ignored and should be heeded as their admission of the laboratory's succeeding with them even if not with others.

I. Even though revision by conventional methods (student revising, - teacher reading, commenting, grading - student correcting) is a basic and necessary process for improving writing, it was virtually ignored in the student evaluation by all but a few students. Usually these students were opposed to the experiment and resisted it. It should be noted, however, that the students were used to this traditional method, accepted its usage here, and some wanted more of it. In the evaluation of the writing laboratory their attention was primarily focused on those activities which were different or were approached differently. Because of the innovations their responses in the survey and in discussion may not give a fair estimate of their feelings toward the usual methods.

J. The particular method of revising by tape recorder was the unique feature among laboratory methods. Its potential is attested to by its popularity with the experimental students. It is not an easy, do-it-yourself gimmick. Mainly, the tape recorder is a tool that when wisely and systematically used will help the student improve his writing through his own initiative, his own faculties, and his own efforts. It is a supplementary method that is helpful to many, usablee by most, resisted by some, ignored by a few. The evidence (from student responses) is so favorable that it would be negligence to bypass this means that seems to get many beneficial results at the cost of only a little extra time and effort.

K. Those students who worked seemed to benefit usually in proportion to their efforts. But individual differences are ever present and variables are ubiquitous. A student already fluent with words and knowledgeable of mechanics is impatient with other methods which only promise to help him do better what he can do passably, acceptably or even well. If a student can write "correct papers" that"say something," he often sees no reason for further exertion. This may be another reason why the average student, reasonably motivated, seems to reap more from the writing laboratory than many of those more skillful students. The least skilled, even with strong motivation and a positive attitude, still have basic disadvantages that more individual attention and the laboratory techniques can help solve; but the laboratory was designed to promote students' independence, and independence without the basic skills can be more hazardous than helpful to the unprepared student.

II. Conclusions

A. A comparison of examination papers of students in the experimental and non-experimental sections reveals a more consistent performance by the experimental students with their papers appearing to be slightly better.

B. Better performance by the students in the laboratory may be attributed to their work being under the scrutiny of not only the instructor but also of their peers. Few students came to class repeatedly unprepared because everybody would have known it.

C. Most students respond to the challenges of the laboratory simply because they are new and different. This makes any new method valuable for awhile, but any benefits derived by the student will not be lost.

D. There is some small evidence that the students in the experimental sections finished the course with better final grades.

E. A positive or neutral attitude seems to influence student performance in writing. Students who liked English or who were neutral toward it usually fared better in final grades than those who did not like it. Although there is a hint that the writing laboratory may nourish an existing positive or neutral attitude and thereby promote greater achievement by the student, the role that attitude plays and the extent to which it influences performance in the writing laboratory remain an enigma.

F. Close observation of the experimental student revealed that the laboratory is beneficial for about half the students because about half used it conscientiously.

G. The students themselves gave stronger approval of the use of a writing laboratory than traditional measurements by grades suggest. There would be writing progress if their interest in improving writing superseded the desire for a particular grade. The laboratory tends to shift the emphasis to the quality of individual performance and away from the symbol of evaluation.

H. The writing laboratory or use of more laboratory methods within the class period can be helpful to many students just by getting them to work. It may not be helpful to others, depending upon their work habits. Although any innovation that helps some students may be justified in a classroom, this variety of innovations promises to help more than just "some."

I. The benefits accruing to students from the writing laboratory far outweigh the disappointments. When the laboratory conditions and rationed time are considered, the benefits derived exceeded expectations.

The enthusiasm for the new and untried is at work in the student evaluation of the writing laboratory, for the seeds of such enthusiasm are revealed in their reactions and comments. If the fruits cannot be seen and counted at the end of one session, it does not mean that better skills have not been developed. It is in this fertile enthusiasm that the success of the laboratory may lie. For there is enough evidence to suggest that these methods introduced to succeeding classes of students will promote and maintain a certain productive novelty that is beneficial in motivating students to want to improve their writing by themselves.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. That students in composition courses be given more opportunity to try these various methods often enough to let them find their own degree of effectiveness in using them.

B. That peer criticism be used occasionally but with some personal guidance from the instructor.

C. That revision of another's work (Some students confuse this with peer criticism.) be used near the end of the session (course) at least once. This operation needs careful planning in the distribution of the papers or it will be useless.

D. That revision by tape recorder be introduced and used whenever possible. Students may be encouraged to be wholly on their own with only minimum guidance for operation; they may be introduced to using the audio-visual facilities in the library independently; they may be given time during the class period to revise a composition in process.

E. That tape-recording facilities be set up in at least a semi-permanent laboratory in the Language Arts Building so that tape recorders can be conveniently available and efficiently used during class time.

APPENDIX

Materials Given to Students in Experimental Sections

Information Sheet

Directions for Using The Tape Recorder

Diagram of Tape Recorder

Directions for First Recording Session

Checklist

Recording Session Two: Revision of Composition

Directions for Last Listening Session with Tape Recorder

Student Survey

(Information Sheet)

NAME _____
(Last) (First) (Middle) (Maiden)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER _____

STUDENT NUMBER _____

SECTION NUMBER OF THIS CLASS _____

INSTRUCTOR NUMBER _____

In what year did you take the SPJC Guidance Tests: 1967___ 1968____

(Specify)
Other_____

HIGH SCHOOL GRADES: (Best estimate of letter grade)

Overall Average 1. A___ 2. B___ 3. C___ 4. D___ 5.F___

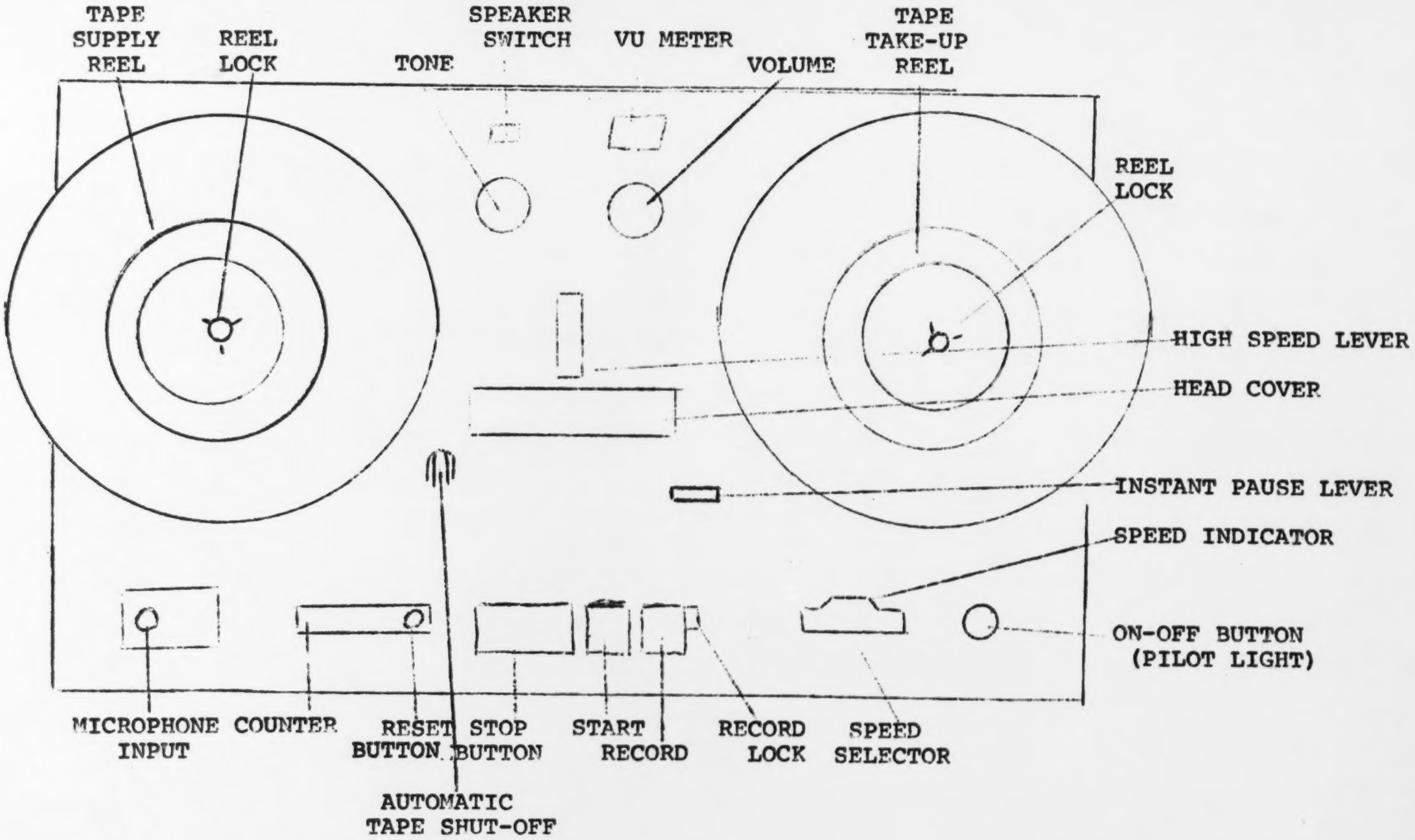
11th Grade English final grade 1. A___ 2. B___ 3. C___ 4. D___ 5.F___

12th Grade English final grade 1. A___ 2. B___ 3. C___ 4. D___ 5.F___

Have you had a college English composition course before? ___ ___
Yes No

How do you feel about the study of English?

1. ___ I like it very much.
2. ___ I like it.
3. ___ I am neutral
4. ___ I dislike it.
5. ___ I dislike it very much.



GETTING ACQUAINTED
WITH THE TAPE RECORDER

THE WOLLENSAK RECORDER

Directions for Using the Tape Recorder (Wollensak)

1. Check electrical supply.
   Plug electrical cord into tape recorder (underneath) and into electrical outlet.
   Plug in microphone if you wish to record.
   Turn on speaker switch if you wish to listen.
2. Install reels and thread tape.
   Place tape reel on left spindle, adjust and lock.
   (Tape should feed from bottom of reel.)
   Place empty, take-up reel on right spindle, adjust, and lock.
   Be sure number on take-up reel is the same as number on tape reel.
   Unwrap tape to about 18 inches in length.
   Place tape in main slot and be sure that tape is between shut-off pin and post.
   Be sure that shiny side of tape is facing operator, dull side away.
   Attach tape to empty, take-up reel.
   Give take-up reel several turns to reduce slack in tape.
3. Begin machine operation.
   For all operations
   Turn recorder switch or push button to "on" position.
   (Pilot light and humming noise are indicators.)
   Check speed indicator. (3-3/4 ips is best general speed)
   Note of caution: Do Not change speed unless motor is running.
   (Motor is running when light is on and hum is heard; black shut-off pin should be out from post.) But the reels should not be turning at this time.
   Set index counter to "0000" by pushing "reset" button.
   For recording
   Plug microphone cord into microphone outlet on recorder.
   Set volume to medium position (4-5).
   To start:
   Press "record lock" button on side while depressing "record" button.
   Check Vu meter to see that needle is responding.
   Press "start" button.
   Start talking.
   To stop:
   Press stop button. (Observe counter number)
   For listening
   Put speaker switch to "on" position.
   To start:
   Press "start" button.
   Adjust volume to needed position.
   Adjust tone to desired position.
   To stop:
   Press "stop" button.
   For other operations
   To rewind:
   Turn lever to left (back) to "fast rewind."
   To increase forward speed:
   Turn lever to right (forward) to "fast forward."
   To stop either movement:
   Bring lever back to center position.

Directions for First Recording Session

Prepare to record

1. Follow "Directions for Using Tape Recorder" through to "For Recording."
   (The only change here is that in attaching tape to take-up reel you must insert end of tape, folded, into inside niche on reel.)
2. Be sure that empty take-up reel has "side 1" facing upward. (These first compositions are being put on "side 1" where they will remain all session. On "side 1" they should be out of danger from accidental erasing. We shall use "side 2" for our other recordings throughout the session.)
3. Resume following "Directions for Using the Tape Recorder" and ready the machine for recording. (*Be sure the "record" button stays depressed and that "Vu meter" responds to light taps on microphone.)
4. Run "fast forward" about 5 digits on the index counter then reset counter to "0000."
5. Compose yourself, have composition in hand, have the microphone about 18 inches away (it can lie on desk) in classroom or 6 inches away and held in hand if you are in Library Preview Room. Be ready to identify yourself.

Record first composition (The one based on "What's Happening to America")

6. Press "start" button.
7. Give name, date, title of composition.
8. Read first composition. (Project your voice; don't whisper)
9. Press "stop" button when you finish.
10. Make note of number registered on index counter.
11. Turn "fast forward" lever to the right and move counter 20-30 digits ahead to leave space between the compositions.

Record second composition

12. Make note of number on index counter
13. Press "record lock" and "record" button, and then the "start" button.
14. Give again your name, date, and title of second composition.
15. Read second composition.
16. Press "stop" button when finished and note index counter number.

Complete recording session

17. Use the "fast forward" to transfer all of the tape onto "side 1" of the reel on the right, leaving the empty reel on the left.
18. Remove your reel of tape from the right and return it to your tape box.
19. Write with erasable pencil the facts of this recording session, such as:

    Side 1,
    Composition 1, date, Title, inclusive numbers (0000 - ?)
    Composition 2, date, Title, inclusive numbers

20. Return the boxed tape to the collection.

CHECKLIST

Main idea or thesis: Is there a topic sentence that makes a comment and commitment?

Development of main idea or thesis: Is there an explanation or amplification of this idea?

Are there main points clearly stated and then supported by details, examples, illustrations?

Conclusion: Is there a statement similar in meaning to the topic sentence that restates the main idea?

Correctness: Are the punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammatical forms correct?

A copy of this flyer was given to each student in experimental and non-experimental classes near the beginning of the course. It can be used as a guide for expository writing, but in this instance it was distributed after introductory instruction for the student's convenience in revising his expository writing.

Later in the evaluation of the experiment this same set of criteria was given to each judge who did the comparing of student examination papers. (See Part Two, III, A, p.13)

RECORDING SESSION TWO: Revision of Composition

Preparing

1. Turn on tape recorder
2. Install your tape. Be sure that reel with tape has "side 2" up. (The take-up reel should be a 7-inch reel at this time. The tape will cling to the center of this 7-inch reel so that attaching the tape is a simpler operation.)
3. Play this tape enough to check that it is not the side with your other previous recordings. Then rewind in order to begin.

Recording

4. Record your composition by reading it effectively. When finished, note index counter and turn the composition over.
5. Rewind the tape onto the 5-inch reel on the left and back to the beginning of the composition.

Listening

6. Listen to your composition as objectively as you can. (Do not look at the paper and follow it. Just listen!)
7. Listen for:
   a. A central idea that spurs the reader's interest and makes a commitment to him.
   b. A clear presentation or designation of the main points that support the thesis or central idea as that thesis is developed.
   c. Details that support or prove the main points by particulars, examples, or illustrations.
   d. Coherence and continuity.
      Are there gaps in the thought? Can they be bridged by transitional words or expressions? Can they be overcome by a rewording of the two adjacent sentences?
   e. Repetition of words and ideas.
      Can pronouns bind the sentences together? Are the main points repeated in part to bind them to the central idea? Is there an effective repetition of sentence patterns and word order?
   f. A conclusion that ties the composition all together and to the central idea or thesis.

Revising

8. Rewind tape back to beginning of composition.
9. Listen to the composition again but this time make notations for improvement on the original composition or on another sheet of paper or both.
10. Play this over several times, if possible, making notations for improvement each time.
11. Record the improved version on the tape, following the original recording.
12. Listen to this revision and make notations for further improvement.

Completing

13. Rewind tape onto "side 2" of 5-inch reel and return it to the box.
14. Turn off tape recorder.
15. Return to the classroom.

DIRECTIONS FOR LAST LISTENING SESSION WITH TAPE RECORDER

Preparation:

1. Place tape reel with "Side 2" up on left spindle.
2. Thread tape and attach it to take-up reel.
3. Turn switch to "fast forward" and transfer tape completely to reel on right spindle.
4. When transfer is completed, remove empty 5-inch reel from left spindle.
5. Then take tape reel from right spindle; turn it over; and place it on left spindle.
6. Place empty 5-inch reel on right spindle with "Side 1" up.
7. Thread tape and attach to take-up reel.

Listening:

1. Play both short compositions through and listen carefully. (Do not look at written composition.)
2. Make notations of strengths and weaknesses in both as you listen to them again.
3. Now look at the compositions to observe other strengths and weaknesses.
4. Listen again to the compositions as you follow the paper.
5. Think of your more recent recordings. How do these early ones compare with the later ones?
6. What improvements have been made?
7. Are they significant improvements or only minor ones?
8. Do you think these improvements would have been accomplished even without the tape recorder?

CONCLUSION:

1. Turn switch to "fast forward" and transfer all tape to the reel on the right spindle.
2. Remove full reel and return it to the box.

*** *** *** ***

1. Which of these methods used in the writing laboratory did you find helpful? (You may have more than one answer.)

_____peer criticism
_____revision of another's work
_____revision of own work by conventional method
_____revision of own work by using tape recorder
_____none

2. Which one of these methods was most helpful?

_____peer criticism
_____revision of another's work
_____revision of own work by conventional methods
_____revision by using tape recorder
_____none

3. Was the guidance given by the instructor in the laboratory sessions satisfactory?
(Answer yes or no for each)

a. _____when peer criticism was used
b. _____when another's work was revised
c. _____when one's own work was revised by conventional methods
d. _____when the tape recorder was used

If not, can you say why not.

a. (above) _____

b. (above) _____

c. (above) _____

d. (above) _____

4. Which of these methods helped you develop critical judgment of writing? (You may have more than one answer.)

_____peer criticism
_____revision of another's work
_____revision of one's own work by conventional methods
_____revision by using tape recorder
_____none

Was any one method more helpful than the others in developing critical judgment?

_____

Which one? _____

If not, why not? _____

5. Did you feel more involved in writing and rewriting as a creative process by using these methods? _____

If the answer is yes, did any one method contribute to this more than any other? _____

Which one? _____

Why? _____

6. If you had had your choice, would you have used any method or methods more than we did last session? _____

Which one or ones? _____

Why? _____

7. Did you feel more responsible for your writing improvement than you have previously felt in an English class? _____

Was this a feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction? _____

Neither? _____

8. Did you feel more independent of the instructor than you have felt in other English classes? _____

Was this a feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction? _____

Neither? _____

9. Did you feel that these methods developed in you a greater degree of objectivity toward your writing? _____

Did any one method contribute to gaining this objectivity more than any other? _____

Which one? _____

10. Did you feel that these methods helped you develop a closer scrutiny of your use of language? _____

Did any one method develop this more than any other? _____

Which one? _____

11. Did you feel more self-reliant in improving your writing because of these methods? _____

If any one method contributed to this feeling more than any other, which one? _____

12. Did you feel more confident about your writing in the future because of having used these methods? _____

If any one method contributed more to this confidence, which one? _____

13. Would you have chosen this experimental class if you had known of it in advance? _____

    Why or why not? _____

14. Would you recommend such an experimental class to your friends? _____

    Why or why not? _____

15. Were there times during the session when you wished you were in a non-experimental, more conventional class? _____

    Why or why not? _____

16. If the experiment had permitted it, would you have used the tape recorder for revision outside of class? _____

    Would you have done so voluntarily on your own initiative or only at the instructor's request or assignment? _____

17. Did using these methods to try to improve your writing change your attitude towards writing in any way? _____

    If so, how? _____

18. Did using these methods to try to improve your writing change your attitude towards the study of English in any way? _____

    If so, how? _____

19. Do you have any further suggestions for conducting the laboratory sessions which might be helpful towards their improvement in the future?